

2I: *The Holy Spirit & Stephen's Glimpse of Heaven*

Reasoning from the Scriptures states:

Acts 7:55, 56 report that Stephen was given a vision of heaven in which he saw "Jesus standing at God's right hand." But he made no mention of seeing the holy spirit. (See also Revelation 7:10; 22:1, 3.)¹

Acts 7:55, 56

[55] *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, [56] And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* (KJV)

[55] *But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; [56] and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."* (NASB)

[55] *But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."* (NIV)

[55] *But he, being full of holy spirit, gazed into heaven and caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand, [56] and he said: "Look! I behold the heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at God's right hand."* (NWT)

Stephen was given a glimpse of heaven when he was martyred. He sees Jesus standing at God's right hand. Because Stephen does not specifically name the Holy Spirit as well, the WTBS asserts that the Holy Spirit is not a person.

Please see the section 2E: The Holy Spirit & No Personal Name. Absence of evidence does not demand that the evidence does not exist. Stephen mentions the Father and the Son, yes. The fact that Stephen does not specifically mention the Holy Spirit does not demand nor require that the Holy Spirit was not present. It means only that Stephen did not specifically mention him.

The fact is, the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit **are** mentioned together quite frequently in the Bible. For example:

2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (KJV)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (NASB)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (NIV)

[1] Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. "Entry for 'Trinity.'" Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1985. P. 407.

The undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the sharing in the holy spirit be with all of YOU. (NWT)

1 Peter 1:2

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (KJV)

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. (NASB)

who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. (NIV)

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, with sanctification by the spirit, for the purpose of their being obedient and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ: May undeserved kindness and peace be increased to YOU. (NWT)

There are many other verses that include Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But the Bible also speaks often of Jesus and the Holy Spirit without mentioning God the Father. For example:

Matthew 4:1

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (KJV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (NASB)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. (NWT)

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (KJV)

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NASB)

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NIV)

Peter [said] to them: "Repent, and let each one of YOU be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of YOUR sins, and YOU will receive the free gift of the holy spirit. (NWT)

God the Father is not mentioned in the above Scriptures, but that does not demand that God the Father isn't a personal being.

Jesus is not specifically named as Jesus in the Old Testament (though he appears in the Old Testament, another avenue of study which will likely be covered at some point later). God the Father and the Spirit of God are spoken of together, though. For example:

2 Chronicles 24:20

And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. (KJV)

Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, `Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.' " (NASB)

Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you disobey the LORD's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'" (NIV)

And God's spirit itself enveloped Zech·a·ri´ah the son of Je·hoi´a·da the priest, so that he stood up above the people and said to them: "This is what the [true] God has said, 'Why are YOU overstepping the commandments of Jehovah, so that YOU cannot prove successful? Because YOU have left Jehovah, he will, in turn, leave YOU.'" (NWT)

God the Father and the Holy Spirit are also named together in the New Testament without naming Jesus as well. For example:

1 Corinthians 2:10

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (KJV)

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. (NASB)

but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (NIV)

For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God. (NWT)

Jesus is not mentioned by name in either of the two verses above, but that does not demand that Jesus is not a personal being.

God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not **required** to be named collectively every time one or two are named in Scripture. They can exist as personal beings whether they are specifically named together or not.

The fact that Stephen does not specifically name the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:55, 56 or anywhere else does not demand that the Holy Spirit is an active force rather than a personal being.